

ARTICLE APPEARED  
ON PAGE 26

VILLAGE VOICE  
19 February 1985

# The Rise of the Campus Right

WASHINGTON—The most savage political battles of Reagan's second term are already under way on college campuses across the country. They are being waged by a disciplined cadre of conservative activists who are determined once and for all to rid universities of liberals.

The College Republican National Committee, the youth wing of the Republican Party, is waging an all-out effort to kill Public Interest Research Groups (PIRGs), the Nader-founded campus consumer organizations. In an opening skirmish next week, students at Syracuse University will vote on whether to continue funding the activities of the New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG). NYPIRG draws money from students at different New York colleges through a check-off system, which the young Republican conservatives liken to an unfair withholding tax.

"It's time to quit sitting back and watching the left laugh at us," says Steve Baldwin, of the committee. "It's time to fight back. Our new anti-PIRG project is called the 'The CRNC PIRG-Free Zone Project,' and we are awarding certificates of recognition to all state CR Federations who rid their state of this pestilence."

The College Republicans are not to be taken lightly. From a scattering of clubs in 1980, they have grown to over 600 chapters. This year's budget is \$750,000, compared to \$120,000 in 1980.

The conservative-campus onslaught comes mostly from the outside. One of the most important organizations involved is Morton Blackwell's Leadership Institute, the pioneer in providing training for conservative youth. It aims to train campus conservatives to oust liberal activists by starting and running newspapers and introducing them to modern political technology. Blackwell, Reagan's principal campaign youth adviser in 1980, went on to work in the White House.

The Institute will spend \$200,000 this year, holding seminars and scouting

young conservative talent. "After 25 years of political activity and training," Blackwell wrote recently in *Conservative Digest*, "I have learned that while it is possible to take a competent opportunist and make that person philosophically sound, it is far easier to take people already committed philosophically and make them technically proficient."

Another group is the United Students of America Foundation, which recently

staged a Grenada Student Liberation Day. It provides 350 campus papers with a press service, produces a nationally syndicated radio show, distributes films, and sponsors leading conservative speakers. It will soon launch *New America*, a magazine it says will be a cross between *Rolling Stone* and the *American Spectator*.

Conservatives have been successful in establishing new student newspapers. There are now estimated to be about 85, with a new one cropping up each month. More than 60 of these receive financial support from the Institute for Educational Affairs, the group backed by former treasury secretary William Simon and Irving Kristol.

While the conservative thrust is the big news on many college campuses, there are pockets of resistance. One is Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island. Two-thirds of Brown students voted for Ronald Reagan, but activists at Brown have recently mounted a spirited series of protests against Reagan's military and foreign policies.

In October, 1004 students voted for a referendum that declared the university should stock "suicide pills" for use in case of nuclear war. A few days later

three students demanded that Brown security officers arrest General Dynamics recruiters for "crimes against humanity." The company's Electric Boat division at Groton, Connecticut, builds the Trident submarine.

In early November, 110 students protested Raytheon recruiters by passing out flowers and asking the recruiters about the purposes of the weapons they build and the morality of their jobs. Later that month someone blew a police whistle during a CIA recruitment meeting and 65 students attempted unsuccessfully to make a citizen's arrest. Before a crowd of 500 students, the 65 were tried by the University Council on Student Affairs, found guilty, and warned they would be dismissed in any future protest. John Stockwell, an ex-CIA agent, was a witness for the accused students.

Last week, my colleague Lori Miller reports from Brown, about 100 students, including protesters, turned out to greet General Electric recruiters. Every Thursday students form a "circle of solidarity" on the Brown Green in protest against U.S. policy in Central America. A large demonstration is planned for April.

"Brown is probably typical of most small, well-to-do colleges," William McLoughlin, a history professor and supporter of the anti-CIA student group, has said. "Brown students have four years to hack around until they go on to get their degrees in law school. They have more time to sit around and read *The New York Times*. Brown students should be more politically aware—they have the time, the energy, and the bucks to do it."

## Annals of the Age of REAGAN

James  
Ridgeway

